



National Disabled Veterans

Winter Sports Clinic

HISTORY OF THE CLINIC

The largest winter sports clinic in the world is set for Snowmass Village, Colorado, March 30 – April 4, 2008 to help America's disabled veterans discover their own "Miracles on the Mountainside."

Co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the National Disabled Veterans winter Sports Clinic attracts veterans from across the country, where they participate in the largest annual disabled learn-to-ski clinic for veterans in the world. Each year, the event compliments the continuing efforts of VA and DAV to ensure that they receive world class health care at VA medical facilities.

Committed to helping meet the rehabilitation needs of veterans from World War II to the current War in Iraq, the Clinic provides disabled veterans with opportunities for self-development and challenge through sports and leisure activities, which some may have felt were beyond their reach. At the Clinic, participants learn that having a disability need not be an obstacle to an active, rewarding life. This is particularly true of today's returning disabled troops, 124 of whom participated in the 2007 Clinic.

The origins of the Clinic date back to the early 1980s when Sandy Trombetta, founder and director of the Clinic, began bringing VA patients to a nearby mountain resort to participate in disabled ski programs. As a recreation therapist at the VA Medical Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, he recognized the physical and mental healing that skiing and other winter sports can provide to veterans with disabilities.

The first Winter Sports Clinic was held in 1987 at Powderhorn Resort on the Grand Mesa outside of Grand Junction. During this first year, 20 staff members gave roughly 90 veterans the opportunity to learn to ski using adaptive ski equipment, and helped them participate in a variety of other adaptive activities and workshops.

The popularity of the program fostered its need for growth, and in 1991, the Disabled American Veterans became a co-sponsor of the event. This milestone allowed the Clinic to grow and become the jewel in the crown of disabled sports that it is today.

In 2007, 370 participants attended from across the country, along with 200 certified disabled ski instructors and several members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team. Several participants who learned to ski at the Clinic are now members of the U.S. team.

At this extraordinary event, adaptive ski equipment is modified and updated each year skiing is integrated with other exploratory activities. Veterans not only learn Alpine and Nordic skiing, but are also introduced to a variety of other activities and sports such as rock climbing, scuba diving, trap shooting, curling, snowmobiling and sled hockey. This year, U.S. Secret Service instructors will teach self-defense to participants who are in wheelchairs or are visually impaired.

Participation is open to male and female U.S. military service veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities.

Miracles on a Mountainside!



Department of Veterans Affairs



Disabled American Veterans



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Number of Veterans Participating in the

National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic -- 1987- 2007

Year	Location	Number of Participants
1987	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	90
1988	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	106
1989	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	151
1990	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	171
1991	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	186
1992	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	226
1993	Crested Butte, Colo.	238
1994	Crested Butte, Colo.	256
1995	Crested Butte, Colo.	279
1996	Crested Butte, Colo.	287
1997	Crested Butte, Colo.	294
1998	Crested Butte, Colo.	313
1999	Crested Butte, Colo.	303
2000	Crested Butte, Colo.	331
2001	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	351
2002	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	350
2003	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	305
2004	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	325
2005	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	323
2006	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	340

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2007

Snowmass Village – Aspen, Colo.

370

DAV Freedom Award

Every year, one participant is chosen for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Freedom Award for Outstanding Courage and Achievement. This award is given to the veteran who makes the most progress during the week, and who shows outstanding courage and accomplishment in taking a giant step forward in his or her rehabilitation process. This is the veteran who proves to the world that having a physical disability does not bar the doors to freedom.

The award is inscribed: "We salute your desire to excel so that others may follow." Previous recipients are:

1992	Eric Tate
1993	Kevin Moellenberndt
1994	Christopher Reid
1995	Darol Kubacz
1996	Martin Begosh
1997	Karoline Martin
1998	Butch Cooke
1999	James Milliken
2000	Timothy Doyle
2001	Jim Sursley
2002	Ryan Etier
2003	David Owens
2004	Eric Castro
2005	Oscar Olguin
2006	Joey Bozik
2007	Luke Murphy

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Linnie Howard Spirit Award

Each year since 1987, the Linnie Howard Spirit Award has been presented to one individual who captures the true essence of spirit the way that its namesake exhibited at the Clinic. Howard attended the Clinic in 1987 and 1988. At 69 years young, he was the oldest participant at the time – but he never let that stop him for a moment. He enjoyed every activity and gave it his all. Howard truly represented the spirit of what the Clinic is all about – striving to be the best you can be with the ability you have. Howard died in 1988, but his spirit lives on through this award, which was initiated by Sandy Trombetta, National Director of the Clinic. Every year, the winner is a model for everyone, someone who represents the true spirit of the Clinic – just as Linnie Howard did.

Previous recipients of this award are:

1987 — Louis Martinez

1999 — Joe Jackson

1988 — Urban Miyares

2000 — Frank Harmon

1989 — Steve Powell

2001 — Todd Russel

1990 — Steve Soper

2002 — Gus Sorenson

1991 — Pete Morelli

2003 — Linda Kearbey

1992 — Kelly Rambo

2004 — Gloria Kennedy

1993 — Alton Davenport

2005 — Ruth Kult

1994 — Elizabeth Keitel

2006 — Joey Bozik

1995 — Tony Barriga

2007 — Christopher Semple

1996 — Cyril “Sonny” Johnson

1997 — Dana Bullock

1998 — Mary Robertson

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